

**Interview with Ken Quincy  
Conducted by Linda Byrne for the  
Providence District History Project Providence Perspective**

**May 21, 2008**

**Linda:** Today is May 21, 2008, I am Linda Bryne and I am sitting in the office of Supervisor Linda Smyth in the Providence District and I am with Ken Quincy. We are going to conduct an interview with Ken for the purposes of the Providence Perspective District History Project. Good morning Ken.

**Ken:** Good Morning.

**Linda:** It is nice to have you here today and would you start by just telling us about your childhood and who you are?

**Ken:** Well, I am Ken Quincy and I was born in Denver, Colorado and that is where I spent my childhood and a good part of my life until 1972 when I moved back to where I am now in Vienna.

**Linda:** And what is your address in Vienna?

**Ken:** Bucknell Drive, actually it is just a couple of blocks outside the city limits of Vienna or town limits.

**Linda:** Is there a homeowners Association connected with your area?

**Ken:** A Community Association, the Dunn Loring Woods Civic Association of which last night I was re-elected President.

**Linda:** Wonderful. I guess?

**Ken:** With no opposition! Nobody wants the job (laughingly)

**Linda:** Oh, I was hoping, you are such a formidable President that no one wanted to challenge you.

**Linda:** What year would it have been that you moved from Denver to Vienna?

**Ken:** We moved in August of 1972, we moved into the house.

**Linda:** And by we you mean?

**Ken:** My wife and three young boys all of elementary school age at that time. We chose the area primarily because of the children and the schools. I did a little research and talked to people that had also moved back here or had been transferred as I was and trying to find out where the best schools were and it sort of narrowed down to Montgomery, Maryland or Fairfax County, Virginia and at that time taxes and insurance were notably less in Fairfax County than in Montgomery County so that sort of tipped the scales. Also there was the convenience factor, I wanted to be in walking distance of the school because I didn't want the kids to ride a bus. And we accomplished that because we live right next door to Stenwood School and not too far from Thoreau Middle School and I wanted them to be able to walk to Thoreau also.

**Linda:** And what high school did they go to?

**Ken:** All three attended Marshall.

**Linda:** And then they took a bus to Marshall?

**Ken:** All three actually took a bus to Marshall until that fateful day in the senior year when they drove.

**Linda:** Tell me a little bit about what it was like when you arrived. You started talking about the schools and how you made the study but what was it like when you arrived here in Virginia as compared to today.

**Ken:** Quite a difference overall when we moved into Dunn Loring Woods in 1972 I was of course shocked at the real estate prices. I paid the whopping price of 35,000 dollars for my house and I was shocked that I had to pay that much. But obviously you can see the contrast between now and then.

**Linda:** And what would that house be valued at today?

**Ken:** Well, it has come down a bit but I think it is still 450 or something like that.

**Linda:** Isn't that amazing?

**Ken:** It is incredible. I'm not sure I could afford to buy it now. The area was sort of a contrast of suburban development and rural area actually because at that time Gallows Road was a two lane road with very little sidewalk, you couldn't walk it. There were some sidewalks but not many, there were sidewalks towards Lee Highway. Which if you walked toward Lee Highway from Cottage and Gallows you would pass a farm, which was owned by the Dunn's, and there were horses and cows and everything. You would go right by the Merrifield Apartments and there was this big farm, which was quite fascinating that contrast. And then, you would walk on past Merrifield Gardens Shopping Center and walk back and there was the farm again, quite a contrast.

Also in the middle of our development was a group of about a dozen houses on Amanda Place which had been there for many, many years and Amanda Place was not even paved. So, we'd often walk up Amanda Place to go to the drug store in the shopping area and it was not paved. There were chickens, a few horses some pigs. We use to hear a couple of roosters every morning on Amanda Place, it was like another world. And of course that has all been developed but there were families there that had lived there for many, many years, so quite a contrast. And of course there were not nearly as many people then as now. Tyson's Corner was just a shopping area but relatively new at that time. So that was great we thought being close to a big shopping center like that - course it was nowhere near the size that it is now nor the business component was not there. There is just a lot more people, a lot more traffic and of course the real estate prices are much higher, much more commerce, much more cross county commuting. When we move the main commuting was from out in Fairfax County to Washington, D.C. Of course when we moved here there was no I 66 and there was no Metro and where the Metro is now

there was a Tennis Club, I played Tennis at the time and I thought that was neat to have a Tennis club within walking distance. I remember when they built I66 and I remember after it was finished a lot of people wondered why in world did they built that because there were no cars on it. Contrast that to now when you can't move because of all the cars. Also when we moved back here the Dulles road was just that, a road to Dulles there was no toll road. And you got on that road and went out to Dulles and you could park right in front of the air terminal, which we use to do with the kids and watch the airplanes come in, walk inside and get something to eat, come back out and go home. It was a piece of recreation and nowhere near of course the security there is now because you could park there and sit there and watch airplanes.

Also, there was no bike trail the W& OD had not been constructed at that time and I had watched it from birth to where it is now. I use to ride it when it was not paved and as you rode West there were no bridges over the stream so you always took a towel with you because you had to take your shoes and socks off, carry your bike through the stream get back up on the trail dry off - get back up on the bike and continue your ride. So it's quite a contrast to where it is now.

**Linda:** Yes, it is. Lets go back and talk about your career and what you have been doing and your life's work.

**Ken:** Well my life's work was with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and bank supervision, who insures your banks deposits and also is responsible for the direct supervision of State Chartered Banks that are not members of the Federal Reserve. At that time there was quite a few of them, now there are significantly less but in my early stages of my career I was a bank examiner and I traveled around Colorado and New Mexico, Wyoming and examined banks. Then I was offered a deal I couldn't refuse to come back to Washington to the main office which was on 17<sup>th</sup> and NY Avenue so I transferred back here and then that is when I ended up in Dunn Loring Woods. I had been with the FDIC through 1997 when I retired and have been involved in quite a few volunteer activities since.

**Linda:** Tell me about those.

**Ken:** Well I am a Board Member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Credit Union and have been Chairman of that in the past but when I retired I relinquished that position to be a Board Member. I have got involved in helping teaching English as a second language for Fairfax County over at Pimmit Hills in adult education, which is a very gratifying experience, and as I said before I am President of the Dunn Loring Woods Civic Association and have been since 98', for 10 years now. Recently I have been involved as a Providence Representative to the Fairfax County Park Authority Board, which has been a very enlightening experience.

**Linda:** Yes, Supervisor Smyth appointed you to that in 2007.

**Ken:** Right, to fill out Joanne Malone's term and I say fill out the term not replace Joanne Malone because nobody can do that. I have learned that there are more parks than I could have envisioned in Providence District as well as elsewhere. That is one of the things that impressed me when we moved back here, was the facilities and the growth of facilities recreational and sport programs for the kids that just didn't exist where I came from at the time. It exists now but I was introduced to soccer here I didn't know anything about soccer and I end up coaching for a while and coaching Little League baseball for a while. But the facilities for those sports just amazed me at that time, of course now there are many more of them now. We have also gone to artificial turf or synthetic turf which making the fields more useable more time and more times of the year.

**Linda:** Tell specifically about the Park Authority Board and how many members and how it works.

**Ken:** There are 12 Board members and they meet essentially twice a month regularly but there are many other meetings that can take place various committee meetings. There are committees that cover Operations, Park Development, and Purchasing of Land for Park Facilities and the

Financial and Budget part of it which is quite important right now; those are the main areas where committees have been established. I happen to be Chairman of the Budget Committee because of my past financial experience, I guess, but it is rough at this time of the year as you know. And they essentially serve in some ways as a link between the Supervisors and the Park Authority the operations as well as the public and operations. There are various divisions within the Park Authority that are responsible for different facets of the whole Park Authority operation. We try to server as a conduit between the public and these operational folks.

**Linda:** Does that become difficult?

**Ken:** It can be, probably nowhere near as difficult as what Supervisor Smyth has to contend with; but we do get calls from constituents that want to know why their park doesn't have this feature or that feature or why is there all these invasive plants, what are you doing about this or about that and how about a park here.

We recently had a very successful experience in that and it has to do with the South Railroad Street Park. There was land there for a park and the community asked about a park - can we do something and the community took the thing by the reins and with the help of the Park Authority and a Grant and got a park built, and it is still being developed. It is a perfect example of how the community and the county can work together to gain in this case a park.

**Linda:** I think that is really an interesting assessment of government and the community working together. There are other interviews that have been done for this project where we have heard examples of that, for instance the Oakton Library and the acquisition of the land for that, the Oakton Park and some other things that have been happening in Providence.

**Ken:** Yes and in my stint with the Park Authority Board I am gratified by those types of actions that can culminate in something positive. It doesn't

happen all the time but when it does happen it is very refreshing. I moved here before Oak Mar by the way and I remember when Oak Marr opened.

**Linda:** Oak Marr being?

**Ken:** A recreational center and it was the crown jewel and it was just amazing that you could have a recreational center like that.

**Linda:** What are some of the opportunities one can avail themselves of there at Oak Marr?

**Ken:** There's just about everything, they've got the athletic fields and they've got of course a nine-hole golf course, quite a sizeable driving range, there is swimming, there is racquetball, and there is various exercise equipment areas.

There is not much there that you wouldn't need if you were into some type of exercise. I think they have handball, so it is quite a place. I remember when it opened I was just enthralled by Oak Mar.

**Linda:** What are some other things that you've noticed in Providence good or bad that have happened over the years?

**Ken:** Well again, as I say, when I moved in Gallows was a two-lane road that you could not traverse by foot safely and now you could walk all the way to Tyson's Corner if you are disposed to do so. So there is improvement there. The Metro out to where I live in Dunn Loring Woods is just an invaluable source for transportation and becoming more so. It was touted when it was opened both in Vienna and Dun Loring Woods and some other suburban stops that here is a subway that comes right to your home in the suburbs, just walk out your door and go to the train. It has just been an invaluable transportation facility, I think. So that's a big plus.

There are some negatives that go with that and as Rt. 66 was built and improved and extended, and as the Metro became more popular more

development took place, and more people moved in - more jobs. Unfortunately the way our system is it allows for an imbalance between development and infrastructure improvements. And that has happened not only in Providence but all throughout the Washington, Metropolitan area; but I notice it specifically in Northern Virginia area because that is what I am most acquainted with – that development is allowed to surge far ahead of the infrastructure improvements creating what we have now is the transportation conditions of gridlocks and strains on schools and roads and other items like that because they haven't been able to keep pace with development and that is disturbing all along even more so as I became involved with our community and the Civic Association. Where we are located we are being developed all around and who knows maybe over sometimes but it is concerning that development is allowed to go so far ahead of the infrastructure improvements and that continues to bother me and it continues to happen.

**Linda:** Is there a solution to that?

**Ken:** Well, I've talked Chairman Connolly and Supervisor Smyth a number of times, as have others about this same problem and the fact that this state is a Dillon Rule State creates a problem somewhat.

**Linda:** Tell me about the Dillon Rule.

**Ken:** It apparently restricts what restrictions can be placed on development and that creates a problem. There is another problem in that our taxing authority is a little restricted and what we pay in taxes, much of it goes to Richmond and little comes back. So that is a problem in being able to maintain certain authority activities, roads - perfect example we need to have money for roads but it is all down in Richmond and we can't get it. We have to depend on a Richmond based Authority for our roads such as VDOT and they have the whole State to worry about, so it is a problem. What can be done to improve it? I guess the naive thing would be to say lets do away with the Dillon Rule stuff but I know that is easier said than done and whether it will ever be done, I don't know. There are some restrictions that can be placed on developers but it is hard from the Board

of Supervisors viewpoint. We faced a significant one in our area where there was a plan to put in of all things a baseball park in Merrifield actually right at the Metro Station surrounded by condominiums and retail.

**Linda:** You are talking what size baseball park? for the locals?

**Ken:** It was for a minor league team that is now in Prince William County and has been in Prince William County. They are looking into moving back to Reston. I was amazed that this got any momentum at all and we fought it tooth and nail because it would have heavily impacted our neighborhood. Not just the baseball part but the entire development as well the Merrifield Development but this is much more rational the current Merrifield Development Plan. So it was really a battle, I don't want to say a battle, with the Board of Supervisors and the individual Supervisor we had to do a lot of discussing as to the impact on our neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods but because of the way the system works that progressed quite a ways before it was stopped. Just an experience I had and I am having one now with the Tyson's Land Use Task Force which is planning a complete redevelopment of Tyson's Corner into an urban center and it is going to have a significant impact on the surrounding communities and the Task Force is doing it's best to try to address that but the extent of this proposal is so massive it is hard to get your arms around it and they are having trouble. But, I do respect the fact that there is a Task Force comprised of community members that are trying to work this thing out.

**Linda:** There is also the tunnel verses the overhead through Tyson's?

**Ken:** Yes there is and that has been reborn apparently. I understand the tunnel folks had a meeting the other night. There are questions not just from me but have been in the paper and raised by others the way this whole Metro to Dulles has been handled - the non-bidding part of it, the behind closed doors - what seemed to be behind closed doors really has lacked openness - has lacked disclosure. I personally think there has to be public transportation to Dulles and I think that Metro is an answer to help the traffic but I am particularly disturbed along with other people the way this one has been handled - this particular project.

**Linda:** I know that even our local officials have had questions about that as well.

**Ken:** And there is the major question as to after it is operational as to whether Metro can handle it considering their financial needs right now. Just the other day in the news they were talking about the increased rider ship that can be expected because of the gas prices and can Metro handle it, and what is it going to cost for them to handle it? So there is still a question.

**Linda:** Let's go to more family and people things such as schools, churches, businesses and what you and your family were involved in or with over the years.

**Ken:** Well, as I said we raised three boys from elementary school through high school going into college. The school system is just outstanding and we probably couldn't have picked a better location. The schools have changed a bit but as our children were going through the schools they were outstanding. They were ahead, of what I was hearing, of schools in other areas so we were very pleased with the schools. Churches, there are no shortage of churches in Providence or Fairfax County. We started with Our Lady of Good Council and are still there which is in the Vienna area and we are very pleased with that. My wife was a member of the PTA and I was Treasurer of the PTA for a while. We were involved with the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and as I said before I participated in the Little League and Soccer; just a lot of activities for children. Back then there were numerous field trips and apparently schools can't afford the field trips now but they could then and I participated in a lot of those and that is when I learned that children don't need to sleep at night, adults do but kids don't anyway.

**Linda:** Where would these field trips go?

**Ken:** We went to Williamsburg several times and of course it is the parent's job to Chaperone. You have to stay awake all night to chaperone, high school kids and junior high school kids and elementary school kids. But it has been very enlightening in participating in things that influence your family. And our neighborhood is one of those neighborhoods where

everybody knows everybody and watches out for everybody. It is a little less so now than in the past but still very much that way. So we have block parties and there is one area of our neighborhood circle that has had a block party every year for the past 40 years maybe more than 40, but that is just indicative of the way the neighborhood is. We have had a little block party off and on for probably 10 years but it hasn't been continuous. And as I say everybody looks out for everybody else.

**Linda:** So you are still able to have that small town atmosphere that people like in so many instances and be in a metropolitan area with so much available –

**Ken:** That's the way it has been, whether it continue that way, I don't know. It's becoming more urban but that has been the beauty of the location, from my house I can walk to the Metro and take it downtown. I don't remember the last time I drove into D.C., and I go there probably once a week but I always take the Metro. Tyson's Corner is just a few minutes drive, if you don't go in rush hour that is; shopping is there. The airports are time wise very convenient and if you can't drive to Dulles you take the Metro to West Falls Church and they have a shuttle that goes regularly out there which I use to do quiet frequently. So the convenient factor spoils you and we like the Vienna area primarily because of what you just said. It still has a town flavor even though we are outside the town we consider ourselves part of it. There are just things there that are small town like and one example is Nottoway Park, a perfect example of just a neat small town-gathering place and there is Nottaway Nights, which is a huge success.

**Linda:** Tell me about Nottaway Nights.

**Ken:** Nottoway Nights is a - I don't remember how many performances there are, it starts in May I believe through August and I have been tabbed as an MC a couple of times for that. But it brings in entertainment of all types, rhythm and blues, country, popular a lot of good entertainment. You sit on the lawn or on your lawn chairs and it is free. It is just great.

**Linda:** It is sponsored by?

**Ken:** There are various sponsors, Fairfax County of course is primary, but Tyson's Corner is a big sponsor and there are some others I have forgotten. You can fill that in – I always thank them every time but Tyson's is a big one in fact Tyson's personnel even help park the cars, show people where to park, so they do more than just send money they have people there. And there are Friends of Nottaway which is probably one of the stellar volunteer groups I have ever seen and they are really involved. And these are neighbors of Nottaway, people that take pride in that park and they are there for everything.

**Linda:** Do you have Friends Groups for other parks?

**Ken:** Yes there are Friends Groups for other parks and they are very active too, but because of the extent of Nottaway's activities and the participation of that group it sort of stands out. Not all parks are as active as Nottaway or as big as Nottaway and do not have all the activities but there are some very active friends groups in parks I have found out and they have worked with the Park Authority in a number of ways to gain improvements, trails and cleaning up invasive plants and other activities.

**Linda:** What would you like to share with the people that will be moving into Fairfax County and specifically Providence District in the future?

**Ken:** I would say that even in this economy be ready to pay a lot for your house if you are moving from a lower cost area. I would and have recommended this area and I would say Providence and even condensing it I would say the Vienna area just because of the features I have mentioned the pluses and convenience. I would highly recommend moving here for the schools, the parks there are parks everywhere and that is throughout Northern Virginia. Fairfax County has a lot as far as parks and recreational facilities and of course shopping, where else can you go and have this much available to you for shopping, not just clothes shopping but grocery shopping and all kinds of shopping there's just no end to it. I have always said if I can't get it at Tyson's Corner then I guess I don't need it.

You have to caution people about the traffic because it is there and you are going to have to deal with it however I think we're in Providence much better able to deal with the commuting traffic than those further out. Because we do have alternatives in the Metro, we do have a metro we don't have to drive a long ways to, thereby getting into traffic to get to metro that's not true, everywhere but for the most part it is.

There are some great-established neighborhoods that are unfortunately and I have mentioned this to people being affected by tear downs and infill. I think it is creating problems building these McMansions right in the middle of a neighborhood like my own. We haven't been affected yet but it can happen and it creates a somewhat of a strange picture of the neighborhood, it is not that it has to be consistent but these big houses just sort of stand out next to the others and create run off problems which have been documented in various areas of the county as well as elsewhere.

I would again praise the schools even though we are all going through a tight budget but still we are maintaining a pretty good level of service overall, I think and I have learned more about that since I have been working with the Park Authority. Throughout the county it is belt tightening but as parks go we haven't had to close anything yet or cut back yet. Depending on how the economy goes, that may change but the mere fact that the dollars are so tight and services are still being carried out both by the county and Park Authority and schools is a credit.

**Linda:** It makes it a wonderful place to live.

**Ken:** Yes, I have had no second thoughts at all about moving here although I do curse the traffic sometimes. I am still cautious about the development that is taking place.

**Linda:** Do you think that with the rising cost of oil and global warming that the large McMansions and the infill will continue?

**Ken:** From what I have read, no. However I notice it is still going on. But it seems improbable that as many people can afford these if the energy costs go up. Right now Dominion Virginia Power is proposing a significant

increase in their rate and it takes a lot of power for those big homes, power being gas and electric and water. However I do not think as many do that everybody will want to move into a condo or townhouse at Tyson's or Merrifield and other places. Younger people, especially with kids, like yards, they have to have a yard, and I think they would prefer that to living in an apartment style arrangement like condos and townhouses offer.

You will read in many publications and probably hear that it is all changing and that we are all going to live, work and play in one place. Yet we have significant usage of parks in Northern Virginia where people drive out to them they don't walk to them they drive out to them and these are big parks in Prince William County and other counties and they like the outdoors. And I think that is going to continue there has to be a balance here the so-called Smart Growth which to me is a developer's term but anyway they say that people will gravitate towards more urban living. I think that is true but not to the extent they are saying. I just cannot see myself raising a family as I have with only three boys in a townhouse with no yard or a condominium. There are people in New York City that do that I know but I just can't see it. I think there is going to be more urbanization but maybe not to the extent that is predicted by some, I hope not.

**Linda:** Well do you have anything else you would like to say?

**Ken:** Just to underline that my experience in this area has just been great overall and I have heard many good comments about Fairfax County and since I live in Providence I hear many good comments about all that Providence offers and all that Fairfax County offers and I hope it continues.

**Linda:** As a citizen of Providence I will look to people like you who are serving on our Boards, specifically the Park Authority Board to keep things moving in the right direction.

**Ken:** We try, thank you.

**Linda:** Thank you.